Online Safety for Families

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What Are The Risks?

- **Exposure to Inappropriate Material**
- **Physical Molestation**
  - **Child may risk own safety or family member safety**
    - **By providing information**
    - **By arranging an encounter**
- **Legal & Financial**
  - **Child may cause negative legal or financial consequences**
    - **Giving out parent's credit card number**
    - **Violating someone's rights**
- **Loss of Password Integrity**
  - **Child may give out their Internet or AOL password**
    - **Person may claim to work for internet service provider (ISP)**
      - **Teach children to ask you before giving password to anyone**
      - **Know your ISP's password policy (some ISPs never ask members for their passwords)**

What Are The Risks?

- **Privacy**
  - **Child may give out private information**
    - **Name, age, what school they attend**
- **Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Dangers**
  - **Child may access undesirable information**
    - **Some sites & newsgroups promote drug, tobacco or alcohol use**
- **Gambling**
  - **Child may visit sites for gambling with money or 'just for fun'**
    - **Website operation may be legal where it resides**
    - **Gambling by minors usually illegal, regardless of location**
    - **Credit card or check usually needed to transfer funds**
- **Inappropriate Financial Transactions**
  - **Child may be able to buy or sell stocks & securities online**
    - **Would need access to your web browser or AOL account & your brokerage password**

Minimize Potential Risks

- **Make a family rule:** *Don't give identifying information in public messages*
    - **Includes chat rooms & bulletin boards**
    - **Protect home address, school name, & telephone number**

- **Make a family rule:** *Get parental permission before you give identifying information in e-mail messages*
    - **Make sure both you & your child know & trust the recipient**
    - **Reveal personal data like age, marital status, or financial information cautiously**
    - **Protect your identity**
        - **Use a pseudonym**
        - **Unlist your child's name, if allowed by ISP**

- **Get familiar with the internet services your child uses**
    - **Have child show you how to log on**
    - **See what types of information are offered**
    - **Use features for blocking of objectionable material**

Minimize Potential Risks

- **Make a family rule:** *Get parental permission before arranging any face-to-face meeting*
  - **Apply rule to all other computer users**
  - **If a meeting is arranged, make the first one in a public spot**
  - **Accompany your child to the meeting**

- **Make a family rule:** *Don't respond to messages or bulletin board items that make you feel uncomfortable*
  - **May be suggestive, obscene, belligerent, and/or threatening**
  - **Have child tell you if such messages are encountered**

- **If a message that is harassing, of a sexual nature, or threatening is received:**
  - **Forward a copy of the message to your ISP**
  - **Ask for ISP assistance**

Minimize Potential Risks

- **If child pornography is transmitted, used, or viewed online:**
  - **Immediately report to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**
    - **Call 1-800-843-5678**
    - **Visit the CyberTipLine website**
  - **Notify your ISP**

- **Know that online identity is easily misrepresented**
  - **You can't see or even hear the person**
  - **Someone who says *"she"* is a *"12-year-old girl"* could really be a 40-year-old man**

- **If an offer seems "too good to be true", it probably is**
  - **Everything you read online may not be true**
  - **Be very careful about offers involving a meeting or home visit**

Minimize Potential Risks

- **Set reasonable rules & guidelines for computer use**
  - **See "My Rules for Online Safety" at SafeKids.com**
  - **Discuss rules & post near the computer**
  - **Monitor compliance with the rules, especially time spent online**
    - **Excessive use of online services or bulletin boards may indicate a problem**
    - **Late night surfing may suggest potential problems**

- **Don't use internet services as electronic babysitters**

- **Make internet use a family activity**
  - **Keep computer in a family room, rather than a child's bedroom**
  - **Get to know your child's online friends, as you do their other friends**

Child-Safe Surfing Checklist

☒ **Locate computer in your home's most public room.**

☒ **Set ground rules for internet use & record as a "Family Pledge for Online Safety".**

☒ **Share online time: surf the internet with your child.**

☒ **Tell child not to give out personal information without your permission.**

☒ **Don't allow child to respond to websites asking for personal information until you read the website privacy policy.**

☒ **If child wants to meet an online friend in person, make sure a parent is present.**

☒ **Tell child not to respond to messages that make them feel uncomfortable.**

☒ **Tell child to show all uncomfortable messages to you.**

☒ **Notify ISP of any inappropriate internet encounters or uses.**

☒ **Ask questions that help you share your child's online experiences.**

☒ **Learn what the parental control tools can & cannot do, and how to use them.**

Family Pledge For Online Safety: Child

1. I will not give out personal information (my address, telephone number, parents' work address or telephone number, or the name & location of my school) without my parents' permission.

2. I will tell my parents right away if I feel uncomfortable about information or messages.

3. I will never agree to get together with someone I met online, without my parents' permission. If my parents agree, I will meet in a public place & bring a parent with me.

4. I will never send my picture or personal facts without first checking with my parents.

5. I will not respond to messages that are mean or make me feel uncomfortable. It's not my fault if I get a message like that, & I will tell my parents right away so they can report it to the ISP.

6. I will help my parents set rules for going online safely. We will decide what time of day I can be online, how long I can be online, and appropriate areas I can visit. I will not access other areas without their permission, or break these rules.

7. I will not give my internet password to anyone but my parents – not even to my best friends.

8. I will be a good online citizen & not do anything to hurt others or break the law.

I agree to these promises.

_____
Child's Signature

I will help my child follow this agreement & allow reasonable use of the Internet, as long as these & other family rules are followed.

_____
Parent Signature(s)

Family Pledge For Online Safety: Parent

1. I will get to know the internet services & web sites my child uses. If I don't know how to use them, I will ask my child to teach me.

2. I will set reasonable rules & guidelines for my child's computer use. We will discuss these rules & post them near the computer. I will monitor compliance with the rules, especially how much time is spent online.

3. I will not overreact if my child tells me about an internet problem. We will work together to solve the problem & keep it from happening again.

4. I will not use the computer or internet as an 'electronic babysitter'.

5. I will help make internet surfing a family activity, & will allow my child to use the internet to help plan family events.

6. I will try get to know my child's "online friends", just as I do with local friends.

I agree to these promises.

_____
Parent Signature(s)

I will help my parent(s) follow this agreement, & join them in exploring the internet.

_____
Child's Signature